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ABSTRACT

This document was designed to help teams of policymakers, practitioners, and advocates implement inclusive practices in state and local school systems. It is based on a policy evaluation framework with guiding questions to be used to assess the extent to which state and local systems are inclusive in six key areas: (1) curriculum; (2) assessment; (3) accountability; (4) professional development; (5) funding; and (6) governance and administrative strategies. The framework provides a description of key dimensions of inclusion policy, as well as a set of indicators of inclusion policy. The framework was used over a 5-year period in 3 states to promote systemic change and inclusive practices. Following an introductory section providing background information and suggestions for using the guide, the guide addresses each of the six policy areas. Each of these sections includes a summary of the current research in the area, a list of indicators to assist in helping to identify policy barriers to inclusive practices, gaps among policy and practice and/or levels of communication between the state and local districts. (Individual sections contain references.) (DB)

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DETERMINING POLICY SUPPORT FOR INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

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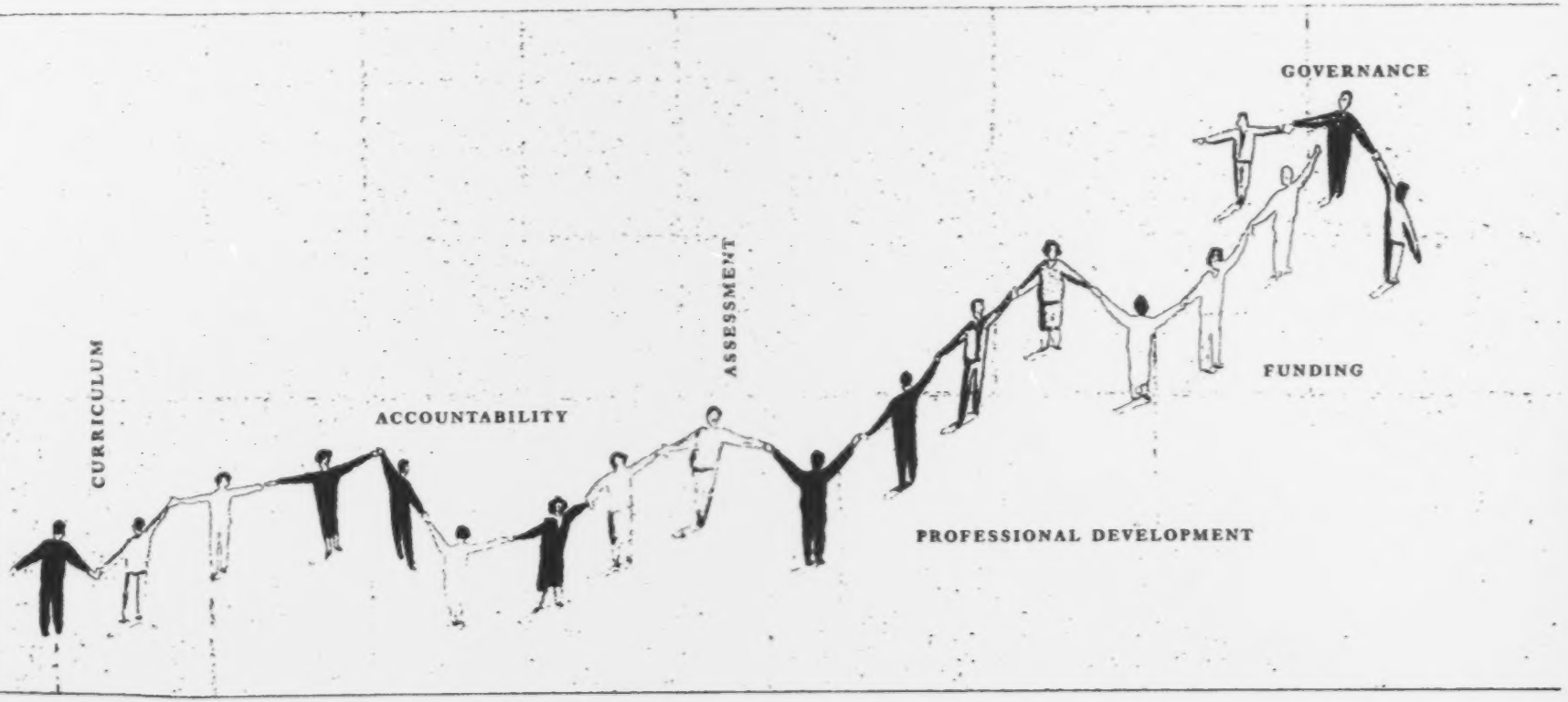

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CONSORTIUM ON INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING PRACTICES

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BACKGROUND

The Consortium on Inclusive Schooling Practices (CISP) was funded in 1994 to help build the systemic capacity of state and local agencies to provide inclusive educational services. For our work we defined inclusion to mean that

> *students with disabilities attend school along with their age and grade peers. A truly inclusive schooling environment is one in which students with the full range of abilities and disabilities receive their in-school educational services in the general education classroom with appropriate in-class support. In an inclusive education system, the proportion of students labeled for special education services is relatively uniform for the schools within a particular school district and reflects the proportion of people with disabilities in society at large. Inclusion is based upon the presumption of starting with the norm and then making adaptations as needed, rather than focusing on the abnormal and trying to fix disabilities to make students fit into a preconceived notion of what is normal. In short, inclusion is not a place or a method of delivering instruction; it is a philosophy of supporting students in their learning that undergirds the entire system. It is part of the very culture of a school or school district and defines how students, teachers, and administrators view the potential of students. The inclusive philosophy of education is grounded in the belief that all students can learn and achieve* (National Association of State Boards of Education, 1992).

To assist states and localities in meeting this goal, the Consortium developed a policy evaluation framework with guiding questions that could be used to assess the extent to which state and local systems were inclusive (CISP, 1996). The policy framework was organized into six key areas (curriculum, assessment, accountability, professional development, funding, and governance and administrative strategies). The framework provided a description of key dimensions of inclusive policy, as well as a set of indicators of inclusive policies at the district and state levels. The indicators were primarily derived from the professional literature on educational policy and special education. In addition, Consortium staff recommended indicators based upon their collective experience in facilitating large-scale change at the state and local levels. The framework was used over a five-year period in three states to promote systemic change and inclusive practices, and to provide a means by which organizations could evaluate the coherence and alignment of their policies, practices and structures.

PURPOSE AND USE

This document was designed to help teams of policy-makers, practitioners, and advocates implement inclusive practices. There are six sections in this guide, each representing a policy area. Each section includes a summary of the current research in the area. The reference section at the end of this document includes supporting citations used to develop the summary of research. Indicators are provided in each of the policy areas to help the reader assess the extent to which the evidence of inclusive practice and policy exists in

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his/her organization. This instrument is best used to clarify or identify: (1) policy barriers to inclusive practices; (2) gaps between policy and practice; and/or (3) levels of communication between the state and local districts. Please note that this instrument is NOT a compliance checklist and is **not recommended** for compliance reviews.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This document can help a planning team assess how inclusive their state and/or district policies are. The results of completing the document can provide a springboard for action planning.

1. **Organize your team.**
   Due to the complex nature of policy assessment, we recommend that this process be conducted by a team of key stakeholders from various agencies within a state and/or school district. Key stakeholders include officials from state departments of education, state developmental disabilities planning councils, state boards of education, university faculty, local school boards, school and district administrators, teachers, parents and advocates. The more input that you have from a greater number of stakeholders the more accurate your assessment will be. The team should gather as many indicator documents referenced in this guide as possible for each level (state and local) they evaluate. See list of recommended sources on pages 3–4.
2. **Individually assess your organization.**
   a) Carefully read the definition of policy that supports inclusive schools, as well as the summary of supporting research in that area.
   b) Review the indicators at the state and local levels. These indicators will help you determine whether your policies are inclusive.
   c) Next identify bodies of evidence that support your judgment that the policies are inclusive.
   d) On a scale of 1-4 rate the strength of your evidence with 4=Strong evidence; 3=Adequate; 2=Some Evidence; 1= Little to No Evidence; DK = Don't Know
   e) Determine whether each item is a priority for change with 1=Change Now; 2=Change, but Not Now; 3=Do Not Change.
3. **Organize a team meeting to compare individual and team scores and determine priorities for change.**
   The team revisits steps a-e above to discuss and compare individual ratings. The team determines priorities by means of consensus (see pages 24–29) and assigns a priority change rating to each item. Items with the highest ratings are used to develop the state or district action plan. Please note that high levels of concurrence in key policy areas may be indicative of good communication within the state, strong knowledge among key stakeholders of state and district policy, and insight into how policy areas relate to inclusion. Conversely, low levels of agreement may indicate poor communication between the state and/or local districts, and/or an overall lack of knowledge by key stakeholders about policy and inclusion.

POTENTIAL SOURCE DOCUMENTS TO DETERMINE POLICY SUPPORT FOR INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

State Level

State Curriculum Standards
National Center on Educational Outcomes: Synthesis Reports <www.coled.umn.edu/NCEO/OnlinePubs>
State guidance on standards: training materials, rules, guidelines
State accountability policy
State Board of Education rules & regulations
State guidance on accountability system
District and school report cards
State assessment policy
State assessment legislation (if it exists)
State data forms
State accountability plan
Special education monitoring process
State appropriations guidelines for rewards and sanctions for accountability
State consolidated plans for federal programs
State professional development catalogues
State guidance on assessment: training materials, rules, guidelines
State alternate assessment: document and guidelines
State professional development plan
University course catalogues and degree requirements
State and regional professional development records
State professional development policy
Evaluation studies of professional development

District Level

Record of curriculum review and development process
Local school board meeting minutes
District curriculum training materials and staff development schedule
State accountability legislation (if it exists)
Samples of teacher lesson plans
Sample of student IEPs
Student portfolios
Teacher portfolios
District assessment data
District consolidated planning documents
District data forms for assessment, policies for reporting data
District web site
District policy manual for curriculum, assessment, accountability, funding
District special education policy manual and guidance
Local newspaper articles about testing and accountability
District data forms for student placement and services
District strategic planning documents
Selected classroom observations
Principals' records of staff development
Building schedules
Faculty meeting minutes
Parent newsletters

POTENTIAL SOURCE DOCUMENTS TO DETERMINE POLICY SUPPORT FOR INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

State Level

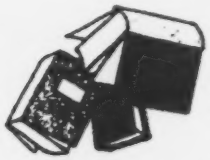
Board of Regents policy on professional development
State teacher licensure requirements
State school funding legislation
Special education cost studies
State Board policy, rules, regulations regarding funding
State Department of Education funding guidelines
Special education cost studies
State Board of Education vision statement, education goals
State Department of Education organization chart
Interagency agreements
Minutes of the State Development Disabilities Planning Council

District Level

District budget
District guidance to schools on budgeting
School finance records
School board budget and financial planning documents
Neighborhood school attendance data
District charts of special education classroom placement
School site council or school committee meeting minutes
District organization chart
District bargaining agreement
School site council training manual
Administrator training manuals
District performance evaluation forms

CURRICULUM

An inclusive approach to curricular design assures that the standards upon which curriculum is developed are broad enough to support the learning needs of all students. Standards are generally of two types: content and performance. Content standards are broad descriptions of the knowledge and skills students are to acquire, performance standards define desired levels of expected achievement with those standards. Key factors include the degree to which the standards are: (1) sufficiently broad to meet the needs of a variety of students, including those who are college bound and those moving from high school to the workforce; (2) appropriate for a diverse student population; (3) supported by a curriculum framework of goals and objectives derived from standards; and (4) inclusive of instructional approaches and materials that are available for use by a variety of students. In other words, instructional needs rather than disability category drive the variation in curriculum and instruction.



WHAT THE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE SAYS

With IDEA 1997, states are mandated to provide all students with access to the state-approved standards. Thus, performance expectations set by the state and local districts increasingly provide IEP teams with guidance in developing goals and objectives for their educational plans. Faced with higher expectations for student achievement, general and special educators are required to use a wider variety of instructional and assessment practices. Over the past several years, teachers have used a variety of methods to address the learning styles of their students, as well as integrate curriculum, collaborate and co-teach, and create flexible grouping and cooperative learning structures. Research shows that all of these practices have positive effects on student achievement. For students with disabilities, a variety of teaching strategies have been developed which enable them to benefit from access to the general education curriculum. These strategies include curriculum accommodation and modification, strategy instruction, flexible small grouping, and positive behavior support. When students with disabilities are educated in inclusive classroom environments using research-based strategies, students improve their engaged time, social interaction, and tested achievement.

KEY POINTS

- *Thinking and intelligence are not singular constructs. Instruction should be delivered in a way that capitalizes on different ways of learning.*
- *Some students require explicit instruction about "how to learn" in the general education classroom.*
- *Planning for a full range of learners at the design point of instruction minimizes the amount of "retrofitting" that must be provided by the special education personnel working to support students in general education classrooms.*
- *Heterogeneous student grouping has distinct instructional advantages and avoid the pedagogical, moral and ethical problems associated with tracking.*

5
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CURRICULUM

	EVIDENCE OF POLICY INDICATORS Check all that apply	RATE INDICATOR	RATE PRIORITY
State Indicators:			
1. State has adopted standards that are broad enough for all students, including those who qualify for gifted instruction and those with significant disabilities.	___ Standards ___ NCEO synthesis reports ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
2. Standards encompass academic and performance outcomes for students.	___ Standards ___ NCEO synthesis reports ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
3. State provides guidance or examples of how to educate students with significant disabilities in the state-approved standards and curriculum documents.	___ State department of education documents ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
District Indicators:			
1. All parents are aware of the curriculum and are actively involved in its development and review.	___ Local district records ___ Local board of education records ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
2. District provides guidance or examples of how to educate students with significant disabilities in the state-approved standards and curriculum.	___ District training materials ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
3. All students have the opportunity to access the core curriculum in a manner that takes into account their individual learning styles.	___ District training materials ___ Lesson plans & IEPs ___ Student and/or teacher portfolios ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
4. District has processes and provisions for accommodating and modifying the curriculum to meet the needs of a variety of students.	___ District training materials ___ District training agenda ___ District special education policy ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3

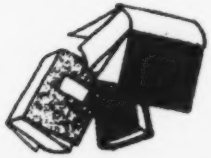
Indicator: 4=Strong evidence; 3=Adequate evidence 2=Some evidence; 1= Little to no evidence; DK = Don't know
Priority: 1=Change now; 2=Change, but not now; 3=Do not change

CURRICULUM	EVIDENCE OF POLICY INDICATORS Check all that apply	RATE INDICATOR	RATE PRIORITY
5. District promotes use of instructional methods that are responsive to the needs of its diverse student population.	___ District staff development materials ___ Lesson plans & IEPs ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
6. District encourages teachers to use new instructional strategies to accommodate the diverse student learning needs in every classroom.	___ District professional development materials ___ Lesson plans & IEPs ___ Student and teacher portfolios ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3

Indicator: 4=Strong evidence; 3=Adequate evidence 2=Some evidence; 1= Little to no evidence; DK = Don't know
Priority: 1=Change now; 2=Change, but not now; 3=Do not change

ACCOUNTABILITY

An inclusive approach to accountability is multifaceted and focuses on the process of teaching and learning and the outcomes of all students, including those with significant disabilities. Essential factors focus on (1) student outcomes rather than on environmental or external data; (2) public reporting of all pertinent information; and (3) planning with all constituencies. A quality accountability system assures high stakes for promotion and graduation, but applies the sanctions for failure to the school systems that failed to educate the student(s), as well as to the student(s) who failed the assessments. In addition, high-stakes decisions for students should be based on multiple measures, with a variety of testing options. In short, the accountability system is structured so that it *matters* to the school district.



WHAT THE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE SAYS:

Accountability in special education has historically been measured in terms of process issues related to compliance with the federal legislation. Like its general education counterpart, accountability in special education is now shifting to the measurement of student outcomes. IDEA 1997 created two fundamental changes that require IEP teams to address: 1) how students with disabilities participate and progress in the general curriculum; and 2) how the learning of students with disabilities is measured and reported in state and district level assessments for all students. However, despite these requirements for special education, IDEA did not require that students with disabilities be included in state *accountability* systems. Even though it is not required, there are compelling reasons to include students with disabilities in the state accountability system. First, including students with disabilities sends a clear message that schools are responsible for the outcomes of all, not some, of their students. Inclusive policies and practices minimize duplication of service delivery systems and contribute to the unification of general and special education. With increased focus on accountability, many states and local districts have moved to high stakes assessment–where student scores on statewide assessment are used to make decisions about promotion, tracking, and graduation. While use of a single, "high stakes" assessment is not supported by the National Academy of Science, the American Psychological Association, and the American Educational Research Association, many state and local policymakers favor such assessment practices as a global indicator of accountability.

KEY POINTS

When used appropriately, high stakes tests can help promote students' learning and equal opportunity in the classroom by defining standards of achievement and helping school officials identify areas for additional or different instruction. Single test scores should not be used to make high stakes decisions for promotion, tracking or graduation.

–National Academy of Sciences, 2000

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ACCOUNTABILITY	EVIDENCE OF POLICY INDICATORS Check all that apply	RATE INDICATOR	RATE PRIORITY
State Indicators:			
1. The accountability system focuses on the performance of all students on tests versus focuses on environmental conditions such as number of books in library.	___ State policy ___ State legislation ___ State Board of Education rules & regulations ___ Additional guidance provided by the State Department of Education ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
2. Assessment data for student with disabilities is disaggregated, yet part of each district's report.	___ District & school report cards ___ State policy ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
3. State collects data on number of students excluded from state assessments in districts and follows up when t he percentage is too high.	___ State policy ___ State data forms ___ Local district data ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
4. Quality indicators for academic performance are articulated for students with disabilities in statewide accountability plans.	___ State policy ___ Local district data ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
5. Special education monitoring is linked to district accountability/ accreditation procedures.	___ State department, office of special education procedures ___ State accountability procedures. ___ State accountability, self-study and/or improvement planning forms ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
6. Accountability systems provide meaningful rewards and sanctions to schools and localities.	___ State legislation ___ State Board of Education policy, rules, regulations, guidelines ___ State appropriations (when rewards are financial) ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
7. State includes special education in consolidated plans submitted to federal government.	___ State department of education plans ___ Local district plans ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3

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ACCOUNTABILITY	EVIDENCE OF POLICY INDICATORS Check all that apply	RATE INDICATOR	RATE PRIORITY
District Indicators:			
1. District maintains a results-oriented data management system for data collection, analysis and reporting–aligned with state accountability system that focuses on the types of services students need, not labels or placement.	___ District data forms ___ District web-site; Building home pages ___ District policies for reporting data ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
2. Students with disabilities are included in the school and district reporting process.	___ Minutes of school board meetings ___ District policy manuals ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
3. The district regularly reports the progress of all students, including those with disabilities, on district and state wide assessments.	___ Newspaper clippings ___ District web site; building home page ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
4. District and schools produce "report cards" on themselves and share them with the community.	___ District policy manuals ___ District web site; building home page ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
5. District data management system tracks the progress of students in inclusive programs as well as those served in segregated, pull-put programs.	___ District data forms ___ District policies on reporting data ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
6. District includes special education in consolidated plans or district strategic planning for the state and/or local community.	___ School board records ___ District plans ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3

Indicator: 4=Strong evidence; 3=Adequate evidence 2=Some evidence; 1= Little to no evidence; DK = Don't know
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ASSESSMENT

An inclusive approach assures that assessments are aligned with state and local standards and that multiple approaches to student assessment are available. Exclusion of students with disabilities in standardized testing is kept to a minimum. Key factors include the following: (1) written guidelines for participation of all students with disabilities in either standard or alternative assessments; (2) assessment data used for accountability purposes; and (3) policies that provide for alternative assessments for students with significant disabilities who cannot participate in the standard assessment. Assessment in an inclusive educational environment must address three interrelated, complex, and often emotional issues of (a) participation of students with disabilities in statewide assessment, with and without accommodations; (b) the design and implementation of an alternative assessment system; and (c) high stakes testing for tracking, promotion and graduation.

WHAT THE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE SAYS:

Prior to IDEA 1997, states were not required to include students with disabilities in their large-scale assessments. At that time, the exclusion rates for states participating in the National Assessment of Educational Progress ranged from 33 to 87 percent. According to the National Association of State Boards of Education (1997), most states included fewer than 10 percent of students with disabilities in their assessments. As states move to implement high stakes accountability systems, recent reports indicate that students with disabilities are often discouraged from taking statewide assessment tests. However, early evidence shows that including students with disabilities in large-scale assessments produces positive results for students. During the 1998–99 school year, under new requirements, 95% of students with disabilities participated in New York's Regents Exams, and almost 60 percent of the 12,516 students with IEPs passed the Regent's English exam. Two years earlier, only 4,397 students in special education even took the exam (*Education Week*, 12 April 2000). In Kentucky, 99% of students with disabilities participate in the state assessment. Trimble (1998) found that, at all ages, students with disabilities in this state were improving on these learning results measures. Specifically, students with disabilities at the fourth grade level had equal or only slightly lower performances in reading, math, science and social studies than their non disabled peers.

KEY POINTS

- *Kentucky, New York, Rhode Island & Colorado report full (95–99%) participation of students with disabilities in statewide assessment.*
- *Early evidence suggests positive effects of including students with disabilities in large-scale assessments.*
  - *Over a two-year period, in New York, the number of students with disabilities taking the Regent's English exam tripled, and 60% of these students passed the exams.*
  - *In Kentucky, students with disabilities at all ages improved their scores on academic measures. At the 4th grade level, their performance equaled or was only slightly lower than that of non-disabled peers in all academic areas.*

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ASSESSMENT	EVIDENCE OF POLICY INDICATORS Check all that apply	RATE INDICATOR	RATE PRIORITY
State Indicators:			
1. State has written guidelines and exemplars for the participation of students with disabilities in large-scale assessments	___ State guidelines ___ State training materials ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
2. State has written guidelines and exemplars for the use of accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities.	___ State guidelines ___ State rules ___ State training materials ___ NCEO synthesis reports ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
3. State has developed an alternate assessment for students with disabilities who are unable to take large-scale test.	___ Alternate assessment ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
4. State has written guidelines and exemplars for the use of alternate assessments for students with disabilities who are unable to take large-scale test.	___ State guidelines ___ State rules ___ State training materials ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
5. State prohibits exclusion of certain groups of students from large-scale assessments such as those with disabilities.	___ State guidelines ___ State rules ___ State training materials ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
6. State has written guidelines and exemplars for reporting assessment results for students with disabilities in large-scale assessments.	___ State guidelines ___ State rules ___ State training materials ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
7. Alternate test is statewide, standardized, and based upon approved standards, not simply progress on IEP.	___ Alternate assessment ___ Guidance on administering alternate assessment ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3

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ASSESSMENT	EVIDENCE OF POLICY INDICATORS Check all that apply	RATE INDICATOR	RATE PRIORITY
District Indicators:			
1. District has written guidelines and exemplars for participation of all students, including those with disabilities in large scale assessments.	___ District guidelines ___ District training materials ___ School board policy ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
2. District has written guidelines, definitions and exemplars for the use of accommodations and modifications of students with disabilities in large-scale assessments.	___ District guidelines ___ District training materials ___ School board policy ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
3. District has written guidelines and exemplars for the use of alternate assessments for students with disabilities who are unable to take large-scale test.	___ District guidelines ___ District training materials ___ School board policy ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
4. District prohibits exclusion of certain groups of students from large-scale assessments such as those with disabilities.	___ District guidelines ___ District training materials ___ School board policy ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
5. District promotes policy that assures that accommodations and modifications used in instruction and assessment are also used in large-scale assessment.	___ District guidelines ___ District training materials ___ School board policy ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
6. District policies assure that IEP goals and objectives are linked to state-approved standards.	___ District guidelines ___ District training materials ___ School board policy ___ IEPs ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
7. In the classroom, students are encouraged to demonstrate their proficiency in a variety of ways. Multiple methods of assessment are used routinely.	___ Student portfolios ___ Teacher portfolios ___ Classroom observations ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3

Indicator: 4=Strong evidence; 3=Adequate evidence 2=Some evidence; 1= Little to no evidence; DK = Don't know
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ASSESSMENT	EVIDENCE OF POLICY INDICATORS Check all that apply	RATE INDICATOR	RATE PRIORITY
8. District monitors and reports student progress on mastery of IEP goals.	___ District guidelines ___ District monitoring process ___ School board policy ___ IEPs ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
9. District monitors and reports percentage of time students with disabilities participate in general education	___ IEPs ___ District guidelines ___ District monitoring process ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3

Indicator: 4=Strong evidence; 3=Adequate evidence 2=Some evidence; 1= Little to no evidence; DK = Don't know
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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

An inclusive system of professional development supports and encourages the involvement of all personnel in addressing the learning needs of students with a full range of abilities and disabilities. Key factors for university preparation and school-based staff development include the following: (1) professional training that addresses the learning needs of students with a full range of abilities, (2) licensure and certification requirements that develop a broad cadre of effective teaching practices for all students; and (3) transdisciplinary training of general and special education teachers. Inclusive professional development must address teacher preparation and staff development to meet the needs of all students in general education classrooms. There is common agreement that many of today's teachers lack the flexibility to accommodate the needs of an increasingly diverse population of students, leaving thousands of students behind.

WHAT THE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE SAYS:

Knowledge, skills, dispositions, and views of self are the four interdependent dimensions of teacher capacity needed to educate an increasingly diverse student population. New standards require students to think deeply about complex problems. To assist students with this type of critical thinking, teachers must have a deep understanding of their content, learning theory, and pedagogy. To instruct a diverse student population, teachers must possess a broad repertoire of instructional and assessment skills, and the knowledge and skill to adjust their instruction based upon student need. To be successful, teachers must be optimistic, have faith in their own abilities, and possess a strong a belief that all students are capable of meeting high standards. Unfortunately, research shows that most teachers do not have the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs to adequately implement inclusive practices. For school reform to succeed, the needs of the teaching staff cannot be ignored. Although most educators and policy-makers recognize the need for professional development, most view the process in a limited way. Research shows that traditional forms of staff development (workshop offerings to separate groups of teachers) do not change teacher practice. Effective professional development is linked to the school improvement plan, is "job-embedded", offered during the school year, and facilitated by a respected instructional leader in the school/district. With these types of opportunities for professional development and ample time to learn the new practices, teachers can increase their competency and improve the outcomes of their students.

KEY POINTS

- *Teachers participating in a statewide professional development program in Vermont indicated that without follow-up and assistance they were not able to use the new practices in their classrooms.*
- *State law in Michigan requires each school to develop a school improvement plan with goals that focus on student outcomes from the Model Core Curriculum. This law encourages teacher development around the core curriculum.*
- *California has developed school/university networks to link staff development to improve the school site and preservice education.*

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

	EVIDENCE OF POLICY INDICATORS Check all that apply	RATE INDICATOR	RATE PRIORITY
State Indicators:			
1. The state supports a coherent system of professional development (pre service and in service) that addresses the learning needs of students with a full range of abilities.	___ State teacher policies ___ University catalogues ___ Regional professional development training records ___ State professional development records ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
2. State Board of Education and Board of Regents regularly review and evaluate professional development of teachers across the state.	___ State Board of Education Policy ___ Evaluation studies of professional development ___ Board of Regents Policy ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
3. State licensure requirements and licensure categories promote the development of a broad cadre of effective teaching practices for all students.	___ State licensure requirements ___ University admissions course requirements ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
4. Certification and teacher preparation programs encourage joint training opportunities for general and special education students.	___ College catalogues ___ State certification requirements ___ University admissions course catalogues ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
5. University and district continuing education requirements and programs promote the development of teaching competencies for a broad array of learners.	___ State certification requirements ___ University admissions course catalogues ___ State professional development requirements ___ District professional development policies ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3

Indicator: 4=Strong evidence; 3=Adequate evidence 2=Some evidence; 1= Little to no evidence; DK = Don't know
Priority: 1=Change now; 2=Change, but not now; 3=Do not change

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

	EVIDENCE OF POLICY INDICATORS Check all that apply	RATE INDICATOR	RATE PRIORITY
District Indicators:			
1. Professional development opportunities and funds used for teacher, administrator and staff development address educational practices that produce positive student outcomes because they are responsive to student need.	___ Staff development catalogues ___ Principal records ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
2. Time is provided for teachers and other personnel to collaborate in the regular school schedule and share expertise about meeting the needs of students with disabilities in the general education curriculum and classrooms.	___ Building schedules ___ Faculty meeting minutes ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
3. Staff development opportunities address the needs of a diverse student population.	___ State certification course catalogues ___ University admissions course catalogues ___ District staff development catalogues ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
4. Transdisciplinary training opportunities are provided so that teachers have opportunities to learn the techniques of other practitioners and to share their own successful practices.	___ Building schedules ___ Faculty meeting minutes ___ District staff development course offerings ___ University staff development course offerings ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
5. Staff development time is used for a mixture of activities including study groups to gain new knowledge, peer coaching to learn to skills, dialogue to link personal staff development plans to school's strategic plan, and/or curriculum planning and development.	___ Building schedules ___ Faculty meeting minutes ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
6. The district includes parents in its professional development activities. Staff development activities are open to school's other stakeholders to work with and achieve better results for students with a full range of abilities and disabilities.	___ Parent newsletters ___ Staff development catalogues ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3

Indicator: 4=Strong evidence; 3=Adequate evidence 2=Some evidence; 1= Little to no evidence; DK = Don't know
Priority: 1=Change now; 2=Change, but not now; 3=Do not change

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FUNDING

An inclusive funding system assures that districts receive the same amount of money for students with disabilities who receive services in the general education classrooms as similar students who receive services in special education classrooms or separate schools. Key factors include provisions for (1) innovative, flexible approaches to state funding; (2) adequate fiscal resources to meet the needs of all students, including those with extraordinary needs; (3) discretionary money to promote inclusive schooling; and (4) funding for staff development opportunities to cross train general and special education teachers.

WHAT THE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE SAYS:

For years many state funding formulae encouraged districts to place children with disabilities in separate, segregated environments. This is because districts in many states were able to receive a complete reimbursement for student tuition at a segregated school whereas the district was only eligible for the normal special education reimbursement if the student received services in the district. Over the past several years states have worked to ensure that their funding formulae are "placement neutral." That is, that a student has the same amount of funding support regardless of where services are delivered. Another trend in special education funding is to provide mechanisms for greater flexibility in combining and co-mingling funds at the school site. Districts engaged in inclusive practices over a five-year period have found that inclusive services cost approximately the same as segregated services, but student achievement is higher in inclusive placements. To assist schools, several states and the federal government have revised their funding formula to provide greater flexibility in spending and support inclusive educational programs. State reforms include pupil weighting formulas, personnel and program reimbursement systems, and block grants to schools. Federal reforms include census-based funding, poverty adjustments, "incidental benefit" rule, and blended funding streams. Studies on finance reform indicate positive reactions from school administrators, state officials, parents, lobbyists, and advocacy groups.

KEY POINTS

- *In our study, costs to the LEA for inclusive services was less expensive than costs for traditional special education programs in six of the nine inclusive programs.*

  –Odom, et.al., 2000

- *A Phi Delta Kappan/Gallup poll found that 47% of the adults in this country felt that special education was underfunded.*

- *Oregon restructured its system with block grants. The formula included neutrality regarding to disabling condition and placement, significant reduction of paperwork, and adherence to the federal "incidental benefit" rule and poverty adjustment. Results of the five-year study indicate positive reactions from school administrators, state officials, parents, lobbyists and advocacy groups.*

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FUNDING	EVIDENCE OF POLICY INDICATORS Check all that apply	RATE INDICATOR	RATE PRIORITY
State Indicators:			
1. State special education funding policies allow districts to draw down the same amount of money for students who receive their services in the general education classroom as those who receive their services in the special education classrooms or schools.	___ State legislation ___ State board of education policy, rules and regulations ___ State department of education guidelines ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
2. State uses its discretionary dollars to promote unified, inclusive programming and professional development that links general education to teachers of students in special populations.	___ State budget ___ State board of education policy, rules and regulations ___ State department of education guidelines ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
3. State funding system provides districts with adequate fiscal resources to meet the needs of all students without financial disincentives for general education placement.	___ State board of education policy, rules and regulations ___ State department of education guidelines ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
4. State allows transfers of state funds between broad categories, such as from transportation to personnel. (Such cost shifting is often needed in inclusive districts as special transportation costs decrease and personnel needs increase.)	___ State board of education policy, rules and regulations ___ State department of education guidelines ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
5. Cost studies are conducted on programmatic innovations such as support teams, inclusion and "push-in" ancillary staff/services, such as Occupational Therapy.	___ Cost studies ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3

Indicator: 4=Strong evidence; 3=Adequate evidence 2=Some evidence; 1= Little to no evidence; DK = Don't know
Priority: 1=Change now; 2=Change, but not now; 3=Do not change

FUNDING	EVIDENCE OF POLICY INDICATORS Check all that apply	RATE INDICATOR	RATE PRIORITY
District Indicators:			
1. Districts use special education and general education dollars in a way that complements rather than duplicates materials and services.	___ District budget ___ District guidance to schools on budgeting ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
2. Special education resources are used to ensure that the general education environment meets the needs of all students.	___ School board policy, rules and regulations ___ District budget ___ District guidance to schools on budgeting ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
3. District funding system provides adequate fiscal resources to meet the needs of all students, without financial disincentives for general education placement.	___ School board policy, rules and regulations ___ School finance records ___ School board planning documents ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
4. Cost studies are conducted to determine expense of maintaining separate systems for general and special education.	___ Cost study data ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
5. The findings of cost analysis were reported to the local school board.	___ School board meeting minutes ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3

Indicator: 4=Strong evidence; 3=Adequate evidence 2=Some evidence; 1= Little to no evidence; DK = Don't know
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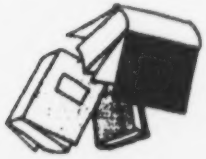
GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES

Inclusive approaches to governance and administrative strategies assure a unified administrative structure, free of barriers between general and special education. In addition, effective approaches assure that site based management teams have adequate training to consider the needs of students with disabilities in their planning and the responsibility to provide those services in general education environments to the maximum extent possible. Key factors include provisions to: (1) promote the quality delivery of instruction for all students in the general education environment, (2) create a unified system based on function, e.g., curriculum, assessment, and finance; and (3) support for school-linked, integrated services. Inclusive governance policies also attempt to unite the lines of authority such that state and local leaders are responsible for the education of all students rather than for only a certain segment of the student population.



WHAT THE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE SAYS:

Changes in school governance and administrative strategies are adopted for a variety of reasons, including support for the implementation of standards-based reform. Many districts have moved to site-based management to create greater flexibility in program delivery. States have also experimented with charter schools. Charter schools operate under contract with the state or local districts and are often exempt from many state/district regulations. The results of these types of governance changes have produced mixed results for students with disabilities. Without consistent state and district policy, site based management can allow building principals the option of not including students with disabilities in general education, despite the requirements of federal mandates to the contrary. Policy research also indicates that few, if any, charter schools include students with a full range of disabilities. There is growing concern about access to and quality of services and supports for students with disabilities in such settings .

Effective leadership is a hallmark of quality schools. School leaders emerge from all levels in the system and assume a variety of roles. Collectively they construct a culture that impacts how and what students learn, as well as how students are supported. School leaders secure resources so that teachers have time for (1) collaborative planning, (2) study groups, (3) co-teaching, and (4) mentoring of new teachers. They also embed expectations and values into the culture of the system. School improvement and the sustainability of change depends heavily upon the quality and support of leadership at all levels of the system.

KEY POINTS

- *Site-based management strategies have mixed results for students with disabilities because they allow building principals the option of excluding students with disabilities from general education, even when inclusion is supported by a federal mandate.*

- *Effective leadership is linked to improved student outcomes.*

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GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES

	EVIDENCE OF POLICY INDICATORS Check all that apply	RATE INDICATOR	RATE PRIORITY
State Indicators:			
1. The state's administration sets a vision for inclusion and actively promotes the delivery of instruction for all students in the general education classroom.	___ State department administrative documents ___ State Board of Education, policy ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
2. The state's department of education is organized into a unified system based on function, such as curriculum, assessment, finance, versus categorical programs, such as special or compensatory education, gifted and talented education.	___ State department organization chart ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
3. State education agencies interact with other social service agencies and organizations to support integrated services.	___ State DD planning council minutes ___ Interagency agreements ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
District Indicators:			
1. Building leaders have responsibility for personnel and services for all students, including those with significant disabilities who live in their attendance area.	___ "Neighborhood School' attendance data ___ District charts of special education classroom placement ___ District accountability policies & procedures ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
2. The needs of students with disabilities and their families are known by key decision-makers on school committees, school site councils and other governance structures.	___ School site council or school committee meeting minutes ___ Faculty meeting minutes ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
3. The building principal supervises and evaluates all of the teachers in the school building, including itinerant services.	___ Performance review policies ___ District organization chart ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3

Indicator: 4=Strong evidence; 3=Adequate evidence 2=Some evidence; 1= Little to no evidence; DK = Don't know
Priority: 1=Change now; 2=Change, but not now; 3=Do not change

GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES

		EVIDENCE OF POLICY INDICATORS Check all that apply	RATE INDICATOR	RATE PRIORITY
4.	The district school board, the superintendent and other appropriate district administrators ensure that bargaining agreements are consistent with the spirit of IDEA 1997.	___ District bargaining agreement ___ School board records, policy, etc. ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
5.	Principal and site-based managers are provided with training on inclusive programming and special education so that resources are deployed at the school level in such a way as to promote inclusion and consider the needs of all students.	___ School council professional development manuals ___ School board records ___ Administrative training manuals ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
6.	School board members are provided with training on inclusive programming and special education so that resources are deployed at the school level in such a way as to promote inclusion and consider the needs of all students.	___ School council professional development manuals ___ School board records ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3
7.	Teachers are evaluated on their ability to bring students from diverse groups to high levels of achievement.	___ District performance evaluating procedures, forms ___ District bargaining agreement ___ School board records, policy, etc. ___ Other: _____	4 3 2 1 DK	1 2 3

Indicator: 4=Strong evidence; 3=Adequate evidence 2=Some evidence; 1= Little to no evidence; DK = Don't know
Priority: 1=Change now; 2=Change, but not now; 3=Do not change

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CURRICULUM	PRIORITY CHANGE RATING		COMMENTS
	Self	Team	
State Indicators:			
1. Sufficiently broad standards			
2. Academic & performance outcomes			
3. State guidance on how to educate all students in standards			
District Indicators:			
1. All parents involved in curriculum development			
2. District guidance on how to educate all students			
3. Account for learning styles			
4. Accommodation & modification of curriculum			
5. Variety of instructional methods			
6. District encourages use of new instructional strategies			

Priority Change Rating: 1=Change immediately; 2=Change, but not now; 3=No change necessary

ACCOUNTABILITY

	PRIORITY CHANGE RATING		COMMENTS
	Self	Team	
State Indicators:			
1. Accountability system focuses on student performance, not environmental conditions.			
2. Student assessment data is disaggregated on district reports			
3. State collects–and acts on–exclusion data.			
4. Students with disabilities are included in statewide accountability plans.			
5. Special educating monitoring is linked to accountability.			
6. Accountability systems provide meaningful rewards and sanctions.			
7. District maintains results-oriented data management system.			

Priority Change Rating: 1=Change immediately; 2=Change, but not now; 3=No change necessary

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ACCOUNTABILITY	PRIORITY CHANGE RATING		COMMENTS
	Self	Team	
District Indicators:			
1. Data management system tracks services students need, not labels or placements.			
2. Students with disabilities are included in the reporting process.			
3. District regularly reports the progress of *all* students on assessments.			
4. Districts and schools produce report cards.			
5. Data management system tracks progress of students with disabilities in inclusive and segregated environments.			
6. Special education included in consolidated and district plans.			

Priority Change Rating: 1=Change immediately; 2=Change, but not now; 3=No change necessary

ASSESSMENT	PRIORITY CHANGE RATING		COMMENTS
	Self	Team	
State Indicators:			
1. State has guidelines for participation of students with disabilities in large-scale assessments			
2. State has exemplars for accommodations & modifications.			
3. State has developed an alternate assessment.			
4. State has guidelines for students with disabilities who are not able to participate in large-scale assessments.			
5. State prohibits exclusion of certain groups of students.			
6. State has guidelines and exemplars for report to public.			
7. Alternate test is linked to standards, not simply progress on IEP.			

Priority Change Rating: 1=Change immediately; 2=Change, but not now; 3=No change necessary

ASSESSMENT	PRIORITY CHANGE RATING		COMMENTS
	Self	Team	
District Indicators:			
1. District has guidelines for participation and performance of all students on tests.			
2. District has guidelines and examples for use of accommodations and adaptations.			
3. District provides alternate forms of assessment for students who cannot participate in state test.			
4. District policies support inclusion, rather than exclusion.			
5. District ensures consistency between accommodations/adaptations used in classrooms and those used in large-scale assessment.			
6. IEP goals/objectives are linked to state standards.			
7. Multiple forms of assessment are used regularly.			
8. District disaggregates data on student test scores.			
9. District reports data on access to the general education curriculum.			

Priority Change Rating: 1=Change immediately; 2=Change, but not now; 3=No change necessary

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	PRIORITY CHANGE RATING		COMMENTS
	Self	Team	
State Indicators:			
1. State supports inservice & preservice on inclusive practices			
2. State regularly evaluates professional development of teachers.			
3. State certification promotes development of broad array of teaching practices			
4. State supports joint training opportunities			
5. Continuing education promotes teacher competencies for teaching diverse learners.			
District Indicators:			
1. District professional development focuses on achieving positive student outcomes			
2. Time is provided for teachers to collaborate			
3. Staff development addresses diversity of learners			
4. Transdisciplinary training opportunities are provided.			
5. Staff development is linked to school improvement			
6. Parents are included in professional development.			

Priority Change Rating: 1=Change immediately; 2=Change, but not now; 3=No change necessary

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GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES	PRIORITY CHANGE RATING		COMMENTS
	Self	Team	
State Indicators:			
1. State sets vision and promotes delivery of instruction to all students.			
2. State department is unified, organized by function.			
3. State promotes integrated services and supports.			
District Indicators:			
1. Building principals supervise all programs in their buildings.			
2. Key stakeholders are familiar with service and support needs of students with disabilities.			
3. Building principals supervise all staff in their buildings.			
4. Bargaining agreements are consistent with IDEA			
5. Site-based managers are provided with training on inclusive practices.			
6. School board members are provided training about inclusive practices.			
7. Teachers are evaluated on their ability to ensure that diverse learners attain high levels of achievement.			

Priority Change Rating: 1=Change immediately; 2=Change, but not now; 3=No change necessary

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